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On Campus with Max Shulman

(Author of "I Was a Teen-age Dwarf", "The Many Loves of Dobie Gillis", etc.)

ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER DOLLAR

With today's entry I begin my ninth year of writing columns in your school newspaper for the makers of Marlboro Cigarettes.

Nine years, I believe you will agree, is a long time. In fact, it took only a little longer than nine years to dig the Suez Canal, and you know what a gigantic undertaking that was! To be sure, the work would have gone more rapidly had the shovel been invented at that time, but, as we all know, the shovel was not invented until 1946 by Walter R. Shovel of Cleveland, Ohio. Before Mr. Shovel's discovery in 1946, all digging was done with sugar tongs—a method unquestionably dainty but hardly what one would call rapid. There were, naturally, many efforts made to speed up digging before Mr. Shovel's breakthrough—notably an attempt in 1912 by the immortal Thomas Alva Edison to dig with the phonograph, but the only thing that happened was that he got his horn full of sand. This so depressed Mr. Edison that he fell into a fit of melancholy from which he did not emerge until two years later when his friend William Wordsworth, the eminent nature poet, cheered him up by imitating a duck for four and a half hours.

But I digress. For nine years, I say, I have been writing this column for the makers of Marlboro Cigarettes, and for nine years they have been paying me money. You are shocked. You think that anyone who has tasted Marlboro's unparalleled flavor, who has enjoyed Marlboro's filter, who has revelled in Marlboro's jolly red and white pack or box should be more than willing to write about Marlboro without a penny's compensation. You are wrong.

Compensation is the very foundation stone of the American Way of Life. Whether you love your work or hate it, our system absolutely requires that you be paid for it. For example, I have a friend named Rex Glebe, a veterinarian by profession, who simply adores to worm dogs. I mean you can call him up and say, "Hey, Rex, let's go bowl a few lines," or "Hey, Rex, let's go flatten some pennies on the railroad tracks," and he will always reply, "No, thanks. I better stay here in case somebody wants a dog wormed." I mean there is not one thing in the whole world you can name that Rex likes better than worming a dog. But even so, Rex always sends a bill for worming your dog because in his wisdom he knows that to do otherwise would be to rend, possibly irreparably, the fabric of democracy.

It's the same with me and Marlboro Cigarettes. I think Marlboro's flavor represents the pinnacle of the tobacconist's art. I think Marlboro's filter represents the pinnacle of the filter-maker's art. I think Marlboro's pack and box represent the pinnacle of the packager's art. I think Marlboro is a pleasure and a treasure, and I fairly burst with pride that I have been chosen to speak for Marlboro on your campus. All the same, I want my money every week. And the makers of Marlboro understand this full well.

They don't like it, but they understand it.

In the columns which follow this opening installment, I will turn the hot white light of truth on the pressing problems of campus life—the many and varied dilemmas which beset the undergraduate—burning questions like "Should Chaucer classrooms be converted to parking garages?" and "Should proctors be given a saliva test?" and "Should foreign exchange students be held for ransom?"

And in these columns, while grappling with the crises that vex campus America, I will make occasional brief mention of Marlboro Cigarettes. If I do not, the makers will not give me any money.

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The makers of Marlboro will bring you this uncensored, free-style column 26 times throughout the school year. During this period it is not unlikely that Old Max will step on some toes—principally ours—but we think it's all in fun and we hope you will too.

Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/xfbv0004

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